1: Honigmann: E-5 (1949-1950) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

TECHNICAL CULTURE

126 Like all societies, the Kaska Indians are faced with the problem of surviving in a physical environment. In this division we will discuss Kaska culture as it is directed toward maintaining adaptation to the climate, weather, and natural resources of a specific geographical area, while at the same time it strives to preserve life and comfort by satisfying the physical needs of the human organism.

ANNUAL CYCLE

221 The economic life of the Kaska tribes is closely bound up with the exploitation of their forest surroundings. During the summer months, the people live leisurely around the trading post, relying upon the traders' stocks for almost all of their requirements. The means to buy these goods, however, is the money received for fur that was trapped during the previous winter and spring.

A good time to begin studying the annual cycle is in August or September, when the people, by quitting Lower Post, put an end to their relatively idle summer. Returning home to the winter settlements and trap lines is always undertaken with great eagerness since, among other rewards, it means relief from the expensive diet of canned meat and other staples and promises a welcome supply of fresh meat and fish. The months until early November are occupied with hunting, drying meat, working hide, building or repairing cabins, and manufacturing equipment like toboggans, sleighs, and snowshoes, which will be necessary for winter trapping. With the first heavy snowfall, hunting becomes of secondary importance and trapping begins for fine fur. This activity is often interrupted around Christmas for a visit to the trading post by men and boys. Here skins are sold and additional food purchased for transportation home. Two or three such trips may be made in the course of a winter. With the arrival of March, beaver and muskrat trapping starts and when this period ends in spring, the people are ready to undertake their summer visit to Lower Post, where they arrive in late May or June.

CAPITAL

471 Against this bird's eye view of the round of Kaska life, we now take up in detail the
566 economically productive routines of the people. All of the exploitative and technological processes to be described depend on a remarkably small accumulation of capital or producer goods, much of which is of negligible intrinsic value.

471 A large portion of the capital goods used by the Kaska is not manufactured by the
[439] society but is purchased from traders. Such goods include guns, traps, fish nets, sewing machines, snare wire, horses, most tools and implements, matches, vessels, and utensils. Pack dogs are domesticated locally although small hunt dogs are purchased from Tahltan Indians. Other products, equally important in carrying out adaptive routines, are manufactured by the society. Included here are ladders, windlasses, packsacks, dogpacks, lines, wedges, and skin stretchers. The construction of most native manufactures, however, de-

1: Honigmann E-6 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

goods upon basic tools and implements, like knives, canvas, thread, pulleys, needles, and hills, which are purchased from traders.

Animal husbandry. The dog and horse are the only domesticated animals. Two types of dogs are utilized, pack dogs and hunting dogs. Pack dogs average about twenty inches from the ground and are of no particular breed (Pl. 3, *a* and *c*), while hunting dogs are much smaller. A pack dog becomes useful at about three years and is at his prime in his fourth year. When a dog is six years old signs of weakness begin to appear and his load must be lightened. A family owns from two to five dogs.

Relatively little care is manifested in the breeding, care, and feeding of these animals. An example of poor care was manifested by Nāda who, returning from a hunt early one morning with his dog's nose full of porcupine quills, did not remove them until four o'clock that afternoon. The feeding of dogs is a haphazard procedure, although in general they are more conscientiously fed in winter, when they are required to do more work, than in summer when they are little employed. The animals are also said to eat more in cold weather. Dogs are fed once a day, in the evening. Their food generally consists of purchased dog meal mixed with table scraps and water. Meat and fish are fed to dogs only if these foods are abundant. When traveling in winter, a small piece of lard may be added to the dog meal. If meat is scarce and the supply of meal exhausted, dogs may be fed with a mixture of white or whole wheat flour and water to which a small piece of lard is sometimes added. In winter especially while traveling, food for dogs is served warm. "Just like people like hot tea," Harry Long explained. In a year, it was estimated, three dogs consume about six hundred pounds of dog meal, although this amount can be reduced if sufficient moose and caribou are killed. Trapped animals, such as marten and lynx, are also boiled and fed to dogs by some people. Louie Moss and River Joe, however, reported that they never fed such meat to dogs. "If you do, never catch anything next time."

No systematic attempt is made to train dogs beyond intimidating the animals from attacking people or from rushing upon their game. Formal training, by means of consistent reward and punishment, is completely lacking nor was any evidence seen of a personal affectionate relationship between dog and master. Dogs are rarely admired but often verbally pitied. Typically a dog cowers in front of his master. Some animals, however, are designated as being better trained than others and quicker to obey commands. A man used to better trained dogs finds it exasperating to use another person's poorly trained animals. A rather unsuccessful attempt is made to restrain dogs from indiscriminate barking. Such noise interferes with sleep and is also thought to frighten game out of the neighborhood. Barking dogs are therefore quieted by hasty shouting or by picking up a stick and flinging it in their direction.

In early winter, women and girls prepare brush shelters to house these animals during the cold months. In temporary winter camps, brush is placed on the snow for the dogs to sleep on. Dogs are never permitted in the house or camp. Although pups are given considerable freedom around a camp, after six or seven months they, like full grown dogs, are always kept tied a short distance from the residences. An exception to this rule occurs when meat is scarce and dog meal exhausted. In December 1945, when the ethnographer's party arrived at River Joe's place, three of that man's dogs were seen foraging through the settle-

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

hide which is to be cleaned. Another pole is placed across the lower portion of the horizontally leaning poles and lashed in position. The skin is then perforated and fastened to the frame. When hides are to be softened, they are fixed on a smaller frame, consisting of four poles, in which the side poles are anchored in the ground perpendicularly (Pl. 8, a).

Construction of most apparatus and all tool making is done by men. Young girls sometimes make stretchers for squirrel skin and women commonly erect the poles for stretching and softening moosehide.

Machines employed by the Kaska have either been purchased from traders or adopted from white sources. Among the machines in the former category are sewing machines, owned by women but purchased by men, and outboard motors, the property of men. A pulley in a common possession and in the fall is used in conjunction with an improvised winch to pull boats out of the water. The winch is made by driving two poles about four inches in diameter and five feet long into the ground about six feet apart. Each pole is grooved on the side which is away from the water and about six inches from the top. A smooth green pole, about four inches in diameter, is fitted into these grooves to serve as a winch. The pull of the boat is sufficient to keep the winch from slipping out of the grooves. A handle is made by lashing a green spruce pole, about two feet long and two inches in diameter, at right angles to the winch.

Every household uses such cooking utensils as frying pans, straight kettles varying in size from one to five quarts, coffee pots, bowls, plates, cups, silver plated spoons and forks, wash basins, and washtubs. A few families have also accumulated china cups and dishes. Bottles and jars are generally saved for storing homebrew and may also function as baby bottles, candlesticks, and sugar bowls. The fifty pound drums in which dehydrated milk is purchased are used to store rice and flour. Empty sugar and flour sacks are widely used to contain tea, rice, meat, and many other commodities. Discarded oil tins are used for storing pemmican and homebrew.

Domestically manufactured utensils include moosehide gun cases, embroidered with silk thread, needle cases, made of scraps of cotton cloth, sewing kits of velvet fitted with pockets and embroidered with silk thread, and envelopes of birch bark containing snowshoe or pounded beaver cement.

Productive capital. In general the producer goods needed by an individual or family, both home constructed and purchased, are found in every settlement. Thus each family is in an equal position to secure or create necessary consumer goods. Even if an object is not owned by an individual, it may generally be borrowed from others within the winter settlement or from nearby neighbors. If not immediately required by the owner, such articles are readily loaned, and rent is rarely or never demanded. If an outboard motor is loaned, the borrower is only expected to supply his own gasoline. When dogs are loaned, it is with the sole stipulation that they will be reasonably well fed and otherwise cared for. In short, the necessary productive capital is widely distributed or generally accessible.

EXPLOITATIVE ACTIVITIES

During nine or more months of the year, from the middle of August till late in May, the Kaska Indians are actively occupied in exploiting the resources of their sub-Arctic environ-

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12

Tselona, Espatotena
Frances Lake
Upper Liard

616 *Tselona.* Dichotomous social organization appears to have been absent among the Tselona or Nelson Indians and even today most of these people cannot identify with either exogamous division, except as they adopt a conventional designation following marriage with a woman from one of the western tribes. The fact that one informant from this group affirmed the presence of moieties may indicate his familiarity with the pattern rather than its adoption by the easterly people.

Espatotena. Jenness reports absence of dual organization on the South Nahani and Beaver rivers.[illegible]

Frances Lake Kaska. Two moieties, the Wolf and Crow, were probably present aboriginally in the Frances Lake area as they are today.[illegible]

SOCIAL PRESSURE—LAW AND WAR

626 In this section we propose to discuss the social pressure exerted upon members of the community who departed from expected norms of behavior as well as the pressure exercised upon or by outsiders. The first type of pressure includes behavior usually called customary law, while the second corresponds to war. Norms governing property relations and interpersonal conduct will be presented along with the description of the sanctions available for enforcing those norms.

471 *Upper Liard Kaska.* With the exception of beaver creeks, the microcosmic band did not enjoy exclusive ownership rights to any territory. In other words no family-hunting-
423 ground system existed in the aboriginal period. Indians felt free to hunt or fish anywhere within "their own country," i.e., the territory customarily inhabited by the macrocosmic band. Generally a man avoided those regions which he knew another family to be currently exploiting. Each family (it is not clear if extended family is implied) controlled its own beaver streams, ownership of these residing in the man, although the entire family shared in the resources. Marriages did not secure new beaver grounds
[591] for the husband, who had the choice of returning to his parents' creek to hunt or of taking the animals on his father-in-law's territory. The former pattern seems unlikely because it would result in bilocal residence, a pattern to which informants did not allude. The informant (O) maintained strongly that family control of beaver streams antedated
[552] white contact. Ownership was symbolically expressed in the custom of naming such creeks.[illegible] Other property marks were denied. The development of possessory rights with

George Adele.) Jenness adds Tait in speaking of a tripartite class structure featuring nobles, commoners, and slaves for the Tahltan. Children of the slaves retained the status of their parents but commoners could raise their rank by perfecting. Jenness, *Indians of Canada* (1932), 373.

[illegible] Jenness, *Indians of Canada* (1932), 390.

[illegible] For information of dichotomous grouping north of Frances Lake see above, p. 83.

[illegible] McLean reports that among the Mackenzie River Slave "the house who first finds a beaver lodge claims it as his property, but his claim is not always respected." (McLean, *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (1932), 342). Among the Pelly River people "each Indian has his own beaver country where he can go at any time and get his dinner, as the beaver, if not disturbed, will stay for years in one place or close in that neighborhood. He arrives at his beaver country to find some one has been before him and not only taken his dinner but also his money in the shape of the beaver skins, and if he catches the man that did it as a rule there is trouble of some kind. This is how

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

respect to beaver is partly explicable in terms of the animal's habit of remaining and reproducing within a relatively circumscribed district unless population pressure forces migration of the excess stock. Thus in most years Indians could depend upon being able to find food wherever beaver lodges were known to exist.

Of movable goods a man owned the bark and wood dishes, as well as the eating utensils which he made for his family, his own tools, caches (but not the food upon them), personal clothing, canoe, weapons, toboggan, personal snowshoes, and masks. A woman owned the bark- and spruce-root vessels that she manufactured, personal tools, the dwelling, food, prepared skins, personal clothing, all items except those which she had given to her husband, and paints. Meat on a cache or freshly killed game cannot be considered the exclusive property of either the hunter or his family because the community felt and exercised a claim on such food. Failure to meet this expectation in the case of large game animals aroused resentment. In a sense children owned their toys as well as personal clothing and snowshoes. The mother controlled a child's possessions but they could not be disposed of outside the family, even by lending without the child's permission. By virtue of the control which parents claimed over a young person's nominal possessions they were able to use the latter freely. Although death might be followed by the destruction of some goods belonging to the deceased the custom did not have as its purpose transmission of wealth to the ghost. In the absence of grave goods people did not conceive of the ghost as owning anything. Even the burial clothes were by the corpse "belonged to nobody."

Aside from one's name, ownership did not stretch toward intangible goods. Nobody exercised individual control over songs or folk tales but it is likely that every man enjoyed some exclusive rights over the magical songs which he had dreamed on the vision quest.

Inheritance norms pertained to names and material goods alone.* Following death one half of a man's possessions went to his brother while the children divided the other half. Personal items were destroyed. A son usually acquired the scalps taken in battle. The widow might receive a share of the goods to which her brother-in-law enjoyed paramount rights, but her inclusion in inheritance does not appear to have been rigorously enforced. A man could marry his widowed sister-in-law or else could dispose of her to another husband but it is probably incorrect to list this pattern in a discussion of obscenity. A woman's wealth fell to the widower, who customarily gave all or most of it to his brother's wife. The knife employed to sever the umbilical cord became the property of a woman's daughter.

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a list of wealth between different tribes is started, also amongst the tribe itself." (Field, Unpublished manuscript [1928, 8.) Among the Tsetsaut (Beaver Indians of Fort Liard, perhaps the same group to which Jenkins refers), "when an Indian discovers one or more beaver lodges, if not already appropriated, he immediately puts his mark upon them, and no one dares to intrude upon his property without his permission, although I know of no punishment inflicted upon the guilty party unless it be the infamy attached to the action, which is considered as very mean and dishonest." Keith, *Letters to Mr. Robert Kid* (1890), 68.

* For the inheritance of names see below, p. 100.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

not think of another war," a statement which suggests that fighting brought about rather full release of suppressed anger and strain.[6]

On the return journey scouts were dispatched in advance to learn about conditions at the home camp. They reported back to the expedition. Nobody who had been left behind dared come forward to meet the warriors. To do so would have been an omen of misfortune. Upon returning to camp each man went directly to his own dwelling. Then the women prepared a sweat bath for those men who had been wounded. This sudatory punishment especially strong properties because it included a specimen of every tree that the expedition had encountered on its homeward trip. Weekly for a month or so after the return the men danced with the combed enemy scalps on their heads. This helped them "to forget the fighting." Contact between a woman and a scalp had to be avoided lest the warrior lose his strength. Only the man who had detached the trophy wore it in ritual. At other times the scalp remained in a smoked-skin container. A tattooed line crossing the upper arm just below the shoulder designated a man's participation in a war party. The number of such stripes revealed his war record.[7] While prestige did not constitute a primary motivation for fighting, a record of successful war participation enhanced a man's standing. For a year or two (?) the warrior received gifts of food, not to lumps him but because hunting remained a dangerous occupation for a man who had killed human beings. If "game blood" became mixed with human blood that he had shed, it would make the man "heavy." It remains problematical whether such avoidances constituted disabilities for the man. More likely, it may be argued, refraining from hunting focused attention on the individual that rewarded him for his war effort. It may also be questioned whether a group living close to the level of subsistence could support even one unproductive male per band for one or two years. Warfare or, more specifically, contact with killing, rendered a man unfit for sexual intercourse. Hence a two-month avoidance of cohabitation followed his return. Violation of this taboo might mean the death of his children. The hunting and cohabitation avoidances reveal the antithesis felt to exist between enemy killing on the one hand and sex or hunting on the other. In this connection it may be significant that the contemporary Kaska unconsciously perceive coitus as akin to hunting.[8]

Dease River Kaska. Neither primary family nor microcosmic band exercised exclusive ownership rights over hunting or fishing sites. Generally, however, a band sought permission before moving into an area which another group was currently exploiting. Consent always followed, but the pattern nevertheless reveals a conception of usufruct probably coupled with an awareness that a given area could support only a limited number of persons.

The community dealt harshly with theft, behavior that made a man comparable to a dog. Depending on the gravity of his offense the punishment of a detected thief ranged

[6] This parallels Lantis' interpretation. Lantis, *Social Culture of the Nunivak Eskimo* (1946), 168.

[7] Among the Teit River Kaska a line was tattooed from the corner of the eye or mouth for each enemy killed. The Cree people, however, made their lines on the top of the hoop of the right arm. Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 87, 88.

[8] Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 203, 204.